

Executive Summary

Region 8's Strategic Plan maps out the approach we will take to achieve a healthier and cleaner environment for the next five years, identifying regional strategies to achieve both national goals and regional priorities. The plan has five discrete sections, beginning with an overview of the Region and followed by a review of our strategies to achieve national goals, cross-goal strategies, regional accountability system and EPA's partnerships with states and tribes. This plan broadly addresses the Region's key and overarching contributions to Agency and regional objectives and is not intended to be an exhaustive presentation of our work. A section with specific annual targets and commitments will be added to the plan each year. Our regional priorities - agriculture, direct implementation, energy, homeland security and revitalization - are integrated into the sections, goals and individual programs presented.

Strategy Summary

Goal 1: To achieve healthier outdoor air, the Region's approach includes pursuing innovative voluntary measures; monitoring growth and development trends; conducting ambient air monitoring; reviewing state permits; and, working proactively with our states and tribes to assure air quality violations or visibility impairments do not occur. In addition, we will work with states to effectively control and monitor toxic emissions. To reduce greenhouse gas intensity, EPA manages programs such as Energy Star and Commuter Choice that aim to reduce energy consumption and improve air quality.

Region 8's strategy to achieve healthier indoor air focuses on educating minority and sensitive populations (e.g., children, seniors, tribes). The Region will also work with schools to eliminate indoor air risks and support states in their work to address radon. Region 8 coordinates radiation program activities with the RCRA (Resource Conservation and Recovery Act), Superfund, Emergency Response and Drinking Water programs to respond to terrorist events and prevent releases from storage and waste sites.

Goal 2: Under the goal of clean and safe water, the Region manages various programs that protect ground water, surface water and drinking water. To improve compliance and prevent environmental risks, the overarching strategies of these programs include (as appropriate) maintaining up-to-date permits; supporting state and tribal efforts in developing and maintaining programs; providing technical assistance and innovative approaches to states and tribes; assisting states and tribes in implementing new rules; and developing plans to address water quality issues.

A key Region 8 goal is to restore and protect water quality on a watershed basis. To do this, we will continue to directly support efforts to restore and improve the quality of rivers, lakes and streams. In addition, we will continue to identify the strongest candidates for funding support, as well as leverage funds across several water and multi-media funding sources to maximize assistance for watershed efforts.

Goal 3: One of the Region's primary efforts to preserve and restore land is centered around the areas of reducing waste and promoting recycling and energy recovery activities. The Region will properly manage hazardous waste and petroleum products and increase compliance rates. Together with the Region's states, the primary implementers of RCRA, we will use various tools such as the multi-year strategic work plan to promote and track progress towards program goals.

With respect to our Superfund program, Region 8 will leverage resources to clean up the most serious hazardous waste sites. We will continue to promote the integration of remedy selection and implementation and site reuse with state and local authorities, responsible parties and landowners. The Region will continue to respond to releases of hazardous substances and oil.

Goal 4: In the next five years, the Region will reduce chemical, organism and pesticide risks. Progress will be made by targeting sensitive populations, grower groups and non-English speakers. EPA will reduce risks at facilities and promote chemical safety awareness. To help sustain and restore community health, our regional strategy emphasizes environmental justice and working with sensitive populations. To remediate, reuse and revitalize damaged ecosystems or polluted sites, the Region and its partners will focus on multi-program planning.

To protect and restore ecosystems, Region 8 will use ecosystem assessments to drive future ecosystem management activities and the development of environmental indicators and information. Our assessments will use improved modeling, geospatial tools application and more effectively coordinated and enhanced delivery of EPA's programs to help provide information to meet present challenges. EPA will continue to support community-based efforts to manage watersheds and other natural resources. Additionally, we will work with states and tribes through the wetlands grant program to develop aquatic habitat and monitoring tools.

Goal 5: Region 8 will work cooperatively with state, local and tribal partners to secure and maintain compliance by the regulated entities. The Region will pay special attention to areas and/or programs where we have primacy (non-delegated programs, tribal) in order to make the best use of our resources. To reduce noncompliance and associated environmental risks, Region 8 and its partners will provide compliance assistance to promote understanding of environmental regulations; offer incentives that encourage facilities to identify violations and return their facilities to compliance; monitor compliance through inspections and investigations; and conduct civil and criminal enforcement actions to correct violations and deter future noncompliance. By combining these tools to address specific problems, EPA and our partners can prevent and reduce pollution, thereby protecting human health and the environment.

The regional pollution prevention strategy is to connect people to tools and resources to continually improve their environmental performance. We will continue to work with states and tribes, other federal agencies, businesses and communities to improve pollution prevention efforts. Also, the NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) program will continue to work proactively to identify environmental impacts (e.g., due to energy, transportation, water supply development, etc.) and work with lead agencies to eliminate or mitigate those impacts.